

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-07

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 EA-06 PM-03 DHA-02 NSC-05
NSCE-00 INR-05 ORM-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00 ACDA-10
SP-02 IO-06 MCT-01 /063 W
-----105808 280506Z /23-12

R 280256Z JUN 77
FM AMEMBASSY DACCA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5202
INFO AMCONSUL CALCUTTA
AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD
AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU
AMEMVBASSY NEW DELHI
AMEMBASSY RANGOON
CINCPAC

S E C R E T DACCA 3474

LIMDIS

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1
TAGS: PFOR, PINS, BG, IN, BM
SUBJ: CURRENT SITUATION ON THE BANGLADESH/INDIAN BORDER

REFS: (A) DACCA 1721; (B) DACCA 3439 (NOTAL);
(C) DACCA A-35, 3/11/77

1. CHIEF OF THE ARMY GENERAL STAFF, BRIGADIER M.A.
MANZUR, ASKED ME TO SEE HIM JUNE 27 TO UPDATE HIS MARCH
BRIEFING ON THE SECURITY SITUATION ALONG BANGLADESH'S
BORDER WITH INDIA (REF A). FOLLOWING THE LINE TAKEN BY
GENERAL ZIA (REPORTED REF B), MANZUR SAID THAT THE
SECURITY SITUATION ALONG THE BORDER IS FAR BETTER
OPPOSITE MYMENSINGH DISTRICT, ALTHOUGH HE ADDED THAT SERIOUS
PROBLEMS PERSIST IN THE CHITTAGONG HILL TRACTS.

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MYMENSINGH/MEGHALAYA AREA

2. MANZUR SAID THAT AFTER SEVERAL FALSE STARTS, THE
SITUATION ALONG THIS SECTOR OF THE BORDER IS SATISFACTORY.
GENERAL DASTAGIR, HEAD OF THE BANGLADESH RIFLES,
ORIGINALLY GOT A RUN-AROUND WHEN HE VISITED NEW DELHI
IN LATE APRIL AND EARLY MAY TO WORK OUT A FINAL

AGREEMENT WITH THE TOP LEADERSHIP OF THE BORDER SECURITY FORCES. THOSE LEADERS, IN FACT, CLAIMED TO KNOW NOTHING ABOUT ANY GOI DECISION TO DISCONTINUE SUPPORT TO THE DISSIDENTS. THE BDG CALLED IN THE INDIAN HIGH COMMISSIONER HERE AND READ THE RIOT ACT TO HIM, WHILE DASTAGIR STOOD BY IN NEW DELHI. IN TWO DAYS THE WORD GOT TO THE RIGHT PEOPLE AND FINAL ARRANGEMENTS TO RETURN THE MAJORITY OF THE DISSIDENTS TO BANGLADESH WERE COMPLETED BETWEEN DASTAGIR AND HIS INDIAN COUNTERPART.

3. MANZUR SAID A TOTAL OF 982 "MISCREANTS" HAD ENTERED BANGLADESH UNDER THIS BILATERAL AGREEMENT. OF THESE, 750 WERE HANDED OVER FORMALLY AT BORDER CHECKPOINTS, 168 ENTERED ON THEIR OWN AND SURRENDERED TO BANGLADESH SECURITY FORCES, AND 64 WERE CAPTURED. A FEW OF THESE HAVE ALREADY RETURNED TO THEIR VILLAGES, BUT THE BULK ARE STILL IN RECEPTION CENTERS WHERE THEY ARE BEING SCREENED PENDING A DECISION ON WHETHER THEY CAN BE RESETTLED IMMEDIATELY OR REQUIRE SOME INDOCTRINATION. IN MOST CASES, MANZUR FELT THAT LITTLE, IF ANY, INDOCTRINATION WOULD BE REQUIRED. HAVING LOST INDIAN SUPPORT, THEY SEE LITTLE HOPE FOR THEIR FORMER CAUSE AND WANT TO RETURN TO THEIR HOMES AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE.

4. ASKED HOW MANY HARD CORE DISSIDENTS REMAINED IN
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INDIA, MANZUR SAID THE BEST BANGLADESH ESTIMATE WAS TWO TO THREE HUNDRED. MOST OF THESE ARE IN THE CALCUTTA AREA, WHERE THEY ARE IN LIAISON WITH CONGRESS PARTY POLITICIANS AND FEED INFLAMMATORY STORIES TO THE PRESS. BANGLADESH HOPES THAT THESE GROUPS WILL BE RESETTLED OUTSIDE EASTERN INDIA. MANZUR NOTED ALSO THAT BANGLADESH INTELLIGENCE SOURCES CONFIRMED THAT THE FORMER TRAINING CAMPS IN MEGHALAYA HAVE ALL BEEN CLOSED AND SOME ARE ALREADY IN THE PROCESS OF BEING DISMANTLED.

5. MANZUR SAID THAT AMONG THE RETURNEES ARE FIVE FORMER MP'S, ALL FROM THE AWAMI LEAGUE. FOUR CROSSED AT THE AGREED BORDER CHECKPOINTS AND ONE ENTERED ON HIS OWN AND SURRENDERED TO THE BANGLADESH MILITARY. ALL FIVE ARE COOPERATING WITH THE BDG AND IT SHOULD BE POSSIBLE TO RESETTLE THEM FAIRLY QUICKLY.

CHITTAGONG HILL TRACTS

6. BY CONTRAST, MANZUR SAID HE SAW LITTLE, IF ANY, IMPROVEMENT IN THE CHITTAGONG HILL TRACTS AREA. HE NOTED AT THE OUTSET THAT THE BDG HAS ASSURED INDIA THAT IT WILL NOT IN ANY WAY SUPPORT OR ENCOURAGE DISSIDENTS OPERATING

ON THE INDIAN SIDE OF THE BORDER. HE ADDED THAT BANGLADESH INTELLIGENCE IS SO HIGHLY CENTRALIZED THAT NO SUCH ACTIVITIES COULD BE CARRIED ON WITHOUT HIS KNOWLEDGE OR THAT OF PRESIDENT ZIA. HE REITERATED THAT THERE WOULD BE NO SUCH ACTIONS.

7. MANZUR SAID ZIA RAISED THE CHITAGONG HILL TRACT PROBLEM WITH MORARJI DESAI DURING THE RECENT COMMON-WEALTH MEETING IN LONDON. DESAI SAID HE WAS NOT FAMILIAR WITH THIS SITUATION, BUT THAT HE WOULD LOOK INTO IT AND PUT A STOP TO ANY SUPPORT FOR DISRUPTIVE ACTIVITY BY INDIAN OFFICIALS. MANZUR SAID HE AND ZIA WERE HOPEFUL THAT THE SITUATION WOULD IMPROVE, BUT IT WILL BE DIFFICULT FOR DESAI SINCE, IN CONTRAST TO THE
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MEGHALAYA AREA, SUPPORT FOR THE DISSIDENTS ON BANGLADESH'S EASTERN BORDER COMES DIRECTLY FROM THE INDIAN ARMY. MANZUR SAID THE BDG HAS FIRM EVIDENCE THAT LEADERS OF GROUPS WHICH INFILTRATE INTO BANGLADESH IN THIS SECTOR HAVE BEEN TRAINED AT GOI ARMY FACILITIES.

8. AS EXAMPLES OF CONTINUED DIFFICULTIES IN THE HILL TRACTS, MANZUR CITED THREE RECENT INCIDENTS:
A. IN ONE OF THE MOST SERIOUS TO DATE, A BANGLADESH ARMY VEHICLE WAS AMBUSHED ON MAY 19 AT CHANDRAGHONA WHILE WORKING ON ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE RECENT REFERENDUM. SEVENTEEN ARMY PERSONNEL WERE KILLED, SIX WERE WOUNDED AND TEN SUBMACHINE GUNS AND FOURTEEN RIFLES WERE LOST.

B. ON JUNE 2, THE BANGLADESH ARMY LAUNCHED A COUNTER-ACTION AT CHAIMPHRUPARA IN WHICH TWO MISCREANTS WERE KILLED AND A SMALL NUMBER OF ARMS WERE RECOVERED.

C. ON JUNE 15, THE DISSIDENTS ATTACKED A BANGLADESH ARMY GROUP RETURNING FROM LEAVE, TOGETHER WITH THEIR PAYMASTER AND PAYROLL, KOLLING SEVERAL.

9. MANZUR NOTED THAT THE BANGLADESH ARMY HAS ACQUITTED ITSELF WELL WHEN PREPARED FOR ACTION AND ENGAGED IN DIRECT COMBAT. HOWEVER, IN THE MAY 29 AND JUNE 15 CLASHES, THEY WERE CAUGHT UNPREPARED. THE BANGLADESH ARMY, HE SAID, IS TAKING STEPS TO ENSURE THIS DOES NOT RECUR.

TOTAL CASUALTIES

10. UPDATING FIGURES PRESENTED IN MARCH, MANZUR LISTED THE FOLLOWING CASUALTIES SINCE JANUARY 1, 1977:

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	KILLED	WOUNDED
ARMY	22	15
POLICE, BR AND SAR	22	32
CIVILIANS	10	8
TOTAL	54	55
MASTERS		

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